



Department of Justice

ADDRESS

OF

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BEFORE THE

SOUTHEAST REGION DRUG TASK FORCE
WINTER CONFERENCE

INCURS

FEB 9 1987

ACQUISITIONS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1987
PARK VISTA HOTEL
GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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Thank you very much for inviting me to be here with you today and to participate in this important meeting. Standing here as Deputy Attorney General and facing all of you who are our field forces on the front lines, often under fire, in the war against drugs -- not the rhetorical war against drugs but the real, on-the-ground war against drugs -- I am reminded of a story told about Winston Churchill.

In the summer of 1941 Sergeant James Allen Ward was awarded the Victoria Cross for climbing out onto the wing of his Wellington bomber 13,000 feet above the Zuider Zee, to extinguish a fire in the starboard engine. Secured only by a rope around his waist, he managed not only to smother the fire but also to return along the wing to the aircraft's cabin. Churchill, an admirer as well as a performer of swashbuckling exploits, summoned the shy New Zealander to 10 Downing Street. Ward, struck dumb with awe in Churchill's presence, was unable to answer the Prime Minister's questions. Churchill surveyed the unhappy hero with some compassion. "You must feel very humble and awkward in my presence," he said.

"Yes, sir," managed Ward.

"Then you can imagine how humble and awkward I feel in yours," said Churchill.

I want you all to know that I feel a true sense of humility as I share my thoughts with you about where the OCDEF program is and where it is going. Because it would be going nowhere without you.

First off, I want to thank each of you for your efforts in making the southeastern task force one of the most productive in the country.

You all know that Washington is often viewed as a city with an insatiable appetite for statistical data. And, that often much of that data is massaged and contoured to the needs and desires of bureaucrats and politicians alike. No argument there. I am the first to admit that my eyes blur when assaulted with too many means, medians, and standard deviations.

But today I would like to share with you some numbers that have not been manipulated or changed. They are cold hard realities that speak for themselves and speak exceptionally well of you, of the Department of Justice, and of the Reagan Administration's commitment to the war against drugs.

Since their inception in 1983, the task forces have proven highly effective in meeting the program goals to "identify, investigate and prosecute members of high-level drug trafficking enterprises and to destroy these organizations." As of January 1, 1987, the task forces have:

- ° Initiated 1,578 cases.
- ° Returned indictments in 1,128 cases (36% of which involved international organizations).

- Returned 3,302 indictments with a total of 11,832 individuals indicted.
- Charged 646 individuals with RICO and 567 with CCE (continuing criminal enterprises).
- Charged 733 defendants with title 26 violations (IRS code) and 415 with title 31 violations (money and finance including currency/foreign transactions).
- Convicted 5,089 defendants of one or more charges (89% of all defendants adjudicated were found guilty or pled guilty to at least one charge).
- Returned 1,361 indictments involving cocaine; 330 involving heroin; 730 for marijuana; 501 for other drug violations; and 701 for money laundering and other financial offenses.
- Utilized state and local investigators in approximately 60% of task force prosecutions. (Notably, the southeastern region has state and/or local participation in more than 80% of its cases.)
- Seized assets of more than \$201,701,245 in cash and \$293,204,180 in property.
- Obtained forfeitures totaling \$47 million in cash and \$94 million in property.

In calendar year 1986, the southeastern task force alone:

- Initiated 46 new cases (third among the 13 task forces).

- ° Returned 239 indictments involving 855 defendants (first among the task forces).
- ° 44 Of those defendants were charged with RICO and 27 with CCE (second among all task forces).
- ° An additional 24 were charged with title 26 violations and 10 with title 31 violations (first and second respectively).
- ° During this same period, 174 defendants were convicted and cash and property with a total value of \$8,548,991 were seized.
- ° Forfeited cash and property exceeded \$3,500,000.

Those are numbers of which you should be proud. They clearly demonstrate what we have learned in the past four years: That the task force concept works and works well. I submit that the OCDETF program's accomplishments can be attributed to three key undergirding principles:

1. Teamwork, facilitated by co-housing,
2. Strong, consistent leadership; and
3. Resources adequate to the task.

1. Teamwork

The task forces that enjoy the greatest success are those which put competing agency loyalties aside and dedicate themselves fully to interagency cooperation. Petty turf differences simply are not allowed to interfere with the most effective case development and prosecution strategies. The Southeastern Task Force is a prime example. Southern comfort,

one of the most noteworthy of all the task force cases to date, involved a combination of federal investigative agencies working hand-in-hand with state and local law enforcement. Each of you knows that this case could not have been handled by one agency or one jurisdiction. Only the joining together of diverse resources and abilities in a common cause brought what was at the time the largest cocaine ring ever uncovered, the Rosenthal organization, to its knees. The result -- a \$4 billion per year drug operation was shut down.

One element which fosters teamwork and cooperation is co-housing. Here in the southeastern region you are to be commended for achieving close to the ideal in co-housing. In other districts, for a variety of reasons, what has evolved is case-by-case cooperation and co-housing of personnel as needed to effectively support task force operations. The OCDETF working group has unreservedly endorsed the concept of co-housing on a case-by-case basis as an acceptable model. Let there be no mistake. The Attorney General and the Secretaries of Transportation and Treasury, along with their bureau chiefs, have made a commitment to co-housing and will continue to encourage it because it works. It works by effectively facilitating case development, joint investigations and information sharing. It builds teamwork by enabling highly-trained personnel to work with each other and to maximize the resources of their respective parent organizations.

2. Strong and consistent leadership

Not enough can be said of the role of strong and consistent leadership in building task force success. And I am not speaking of single individuals. I am speaking of the United States Attorneys, the task force coordination groups and the advisory committees who play such an important role in determining the direction and focus of the program. Collectively, these individuals provide the glue that keeps the program intact and the impetus that keeps the task forces on track and moving. I am well aware that in a region such as this one, geography makes it difficult for the coordination groups to meet as frequently as they would like. However, I want to stress the importance of these meetings. Nowhere else is it possible for the attorneys and investigative personnel to get together on a region-wide basis to share information and discuss cases and strategies. I urge you to convene and attend such meetings on a frequent basis. This meeting today with attorneys, law enforcement officials from various federal, state and local agencies seeking better methods to defeat a common enemy provides precisely the leadership of which I am speaking.

Remember the OCDEF program is a field-driven program, not a Washington-run program. It has been most effective with the direct involvement of United States Attorneys in the day-to-day operation of the task forces. In recognition of this, United States Attorneys are now represented -- and help to represent you

and the concerns of the field -- on the OCDETF working group which helps develop national policy for the task force program.

3. Resources adequate to the task

This is the point I want to emphasize today.

Do not be misled or disturbed by press reports of partisan claims that the administration has only paid lip service to the war on drugs. Nothing could be further from the truth. As I said, ours is not a rhetorical war on drugs. It is a real war with real people fighting -- and dying -- not a mere publicity crusade. We, in the department and throughout the Reagan Administration have put our commitment and our resources where they can do the most good -- with you in the field on the front lines of the battle.

Just look at the facts. As is so often the case, they speak for themselves.

Federal resources devoted to drug law enforcement, prevention, and treatment have tripled since the Reagan Administration began. The 1987 budget is 220% higher than the 1981 budget. And most of the law enforcement, prevention, treatment and research efforts begun in the 1987 drug abuse initiative are continued in the 1988 budget. For example, \$177 million and \$100 million respectively, are earmarked for prevention and education in the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Department of Defense and Veterans Administration also have resources devoted to this.

During the Reagan Administration in the Department of Justice alone drug-related funding has grown by over 238 percent from the Carter Administration base of \$365.5 million in '81 to an anticipated \$1.237 billion in 1988. At the same time, personnel work-years attributed to drug enforcement will have more than doubled from 7,332 to 14,734.

From its start in 1983, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement program has grown from 1,630 positions and \$112.7 million to a requested level of 2,759 positions and \$199.3 million in 1988 -- this represents an increase of 1,129 positions (69%) and \$86.6 million (77%).

These figures demonstrate six-years of sensible continuing and incremental increases and program enhancements for the war against drugs.

Those who say that the President's 1988 budget means we are less committed to the drug battle are simply wrong. True, we are asking over-all for fewer dollars government-wide than we did last year - roughly 900 million dollars less. But, as we have seen, since 1981 there has been an unprecedented increase in the amount of money allocated to combat drugs. Indeed, President Reagan has presided over the largest increase ever in spending for anti-drug efforts. When he took office in 1981, total spending was just over \$1 billion. In fiscal year 1987 it will be nearly \$4 billion -- as I said, a 220 percent jump. And in

1988 it will be \$3 billion, which will still represent a 145 percent increase over 1981. So, in dollar terms alone, our commitment remains strong.

Now let me quickly analyze the \$900,000,000 diminution for you. Properly understood, you will see that there are no cuts in our federal enforcement programs - indeed there are programmatic enhancements aggregating 72 million dollars. \$350 million of the 1987 budget are financing one-time, major capital purchases that therefore require no expenditures in 1988. Moreover, many of the 1987 dollars are going to one-time start-up programs. Initial costs of these programs will not be incurred in 1988 or in future budgets. The 1987 budget also includes \$225 million for seed grants to state and local agencies that will not be repeated in 1988.

We think that the equitable sharing of assets seized from drug dealers and forfeited by them is a better way for the federal government to assist the states and localities. When the President's 1988 drug budget was prepared, this form of help for states and localities was taken into account. It was important to structure the budget so that scarce federal dollars should be spent where they count the most.

We want to see sharing of forfeited assets take the place of continued out-and-out grants. Sharing of responsibility. Sharing of benefits. Our critics seem to forget this important, cost-free way that the federal government has been helping the states in the drug war.

During fiscal year 1985, the Justice Department approved the transfer of more than \$2.5 million to state and local agencies. In fiscal year '86, this sharing accelerated to \$24.4 million, and sharing for 1987 is estimated at \$28 million, with a 1988 projection for equitable sharing to top \$30 million. It will continue to grow. The potential is enormous.

You should also know we are proposing increases in the Department's FY '88 budget aggregating over \$600,000,000 -- increases in the most vital areas:

- ° INS. INS's 1988 budget includes a 29 million dollar increase over the 1987 appropriations for the border patrol.
- ° The 1988 increase is on top of a 1987 supplemental increase request of \$26 million for the border patrol. We are proposing to add over 1,800 new positions to the border patrol to carry out the enforcement aspects of the immigration reform and control act of 1986. Most of these new positions will be added to the southern border. There should be some ancillary benefit to our drug interdiction efforts on the southern border as these border patrol personnel come on-line.
- ° Prisons. We are seeking an increase of 165.4 million dollars for prison projects, including funds for more than 800 new bed-spaces to the federal prison system for drug violators.

- United States Attorneys. We are requesting an increase of 417 new positions to help handle anticipated litigation increases related to narcotics case referral from investigative agencies, with an additional 44 positions and more than 2.5 million dollars dedicated to task force activity in the field.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. We are asking for 518 new FBI positions, 96 of which are specifically earmarked for the OCDETF and related drug enforcement activities.
- United States Marshals Service. Our request includes an increase of 24 million dollars for drug-related prisoner transportation and court security.
- Drug Enforcement Administration. The request provides for over 400 additional work-years for DEA's programs in investigations, intelligence, foreign operations and technical support.

As you can see in the Department of Justice in our current environment of fiscal constraint, we are putting our resources - the dollars and the manpower - on the frontlines, in the field where they are most needed. And this is true government-wide. Commitment to the war on drugs is not illusory, it is not a clever political crusade armed only with smoke and mirrors. It is a carefully considered systematic strategy which had its beginning in 1981 and which involves rationally planned growth -- growth which recognizes the various developmental stages of the

anti-drug battle and targets resources to make the best use of taxpayer dollars. We have not thrown, and will not throw, money at the problem willy-nilly for short-lived political credit.

Teamwork, leadership and adequate resources -- each of these factors have been important in making the Southeastern Task Force what it is today and each will be critical to our victory in the war against drugs.

The war on drugs brings to mind another, far graver, much different conflict -- our civil war -- and one of its greatest figures.

Near the end of the war, when the fall of the Confederacy was at hand, General Grant invited President Lincoln to come down to visit him at his headquarters at City Point on the James River. As they sat that night around the campfire, Lincoln related some of the anecdotes that were his trademark, and then sat in silence, looking at the fire. Grant looked up and said, "Mr. President, did you at any time doubt the final success of our cause?" Straightening in his camp chair, then leaning forward and lifting his hand by way of emphasis, Lincoln replied with great solemnity, "never for a moment!"

Together, we will succeed in our war against drugs. I cannot doubt it, never for a moment.

Thank you very much.